LATIN PRONUNCIATION.

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AN

ELEMENTARY LATIN GRAMMAR,

BASED ON THE LATEST TEXTS AND GRAMMATICAL STUDIES.

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LATIN PRONUNCIATION.

"Ego sic scribendum quidque judico, quomodo sonat. Hic enim est usus litterarum, ut custodiant voces et velut depositum reddant legentibus." *Quintil.* 1, 7, 30.

"Aliter scribere et aliter pronuntiare vecordis est." *Papirianus ap. Cassiodor.*, p. 2292, 21, *P.*

The exact Pronunciation of the Romans cannot of course now be known.

The following may be regarded as a close approximation.

VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS.

Vowels.

Long.	*Short.*
a as in *father*.	**a** as in the first syllable of *papa*.
e as in French *fête*.	**e** as **a** in *desperate*.
i as in *machine*.	**i** as **e** in *report*.
o as in *tone*.	**o** as in *domestic*.
u as in *rule*.	**u** as in *put*.

In a syllable long by position merely, the vowel has the short sound: e. g. *núx* as in *put*, *lûx* as in *rule*.

NOTE 1. For the Parasitic **u** after **g**, **q**, and **s**, see those letters.

NOTE 2. The Greek vowel **y** (υ) is pronounced like the German **ü**, French **u**.

NOTE 3. An intermediate sound between **u** and **i**, perhaps not un-

like Greek ῠ (" medius quidam **u** et **i** litterae sonus: " *Quintil.* 1, 4, 8,) occurs in many real Latin words in short syllables, as in *opt*$^{u}_{i}$*mus*, *dec*$^{u}_{i}$*mus*, before **m** and Labials. Sometimes it is written **u**, sometimes **i**; *e. g.* original *lŭbet* changes to *lĭbet.*

Diphthongs.

"*Δίφθογγοι λέγονται, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ δύο φθόγγων συνίστανται· φθόγγοι δὲ καλοῦνται κατὰ μουσικὸν λόγον τὰ γράμματα.*" *Bekker's Anecd.* p. 803, [6]: " diphthongi autem dicuntur, quod binos p h t h o n g o s, hoc est voces, comprehendunt. nam singulae vocales suas voces habent." (*Priscian.* I. p. 37, [13], *Hertz.*)

ae (originally written **ai**) like the English word *ay*.

Note. As early as the times of Lucilius (died 103 B. C.) and Varro (died about 27 B. C.) the diphthong **ae** was degraded to a mere **e** in Vulgar Latin: e. g. *edus*, *Cecilius*, *pretor*, for *haedus*, *Caecilius*, *praetor*. This pronunciation began to creep into real Latin under the early emperors, and became the prevalent pronunciation in the Third Century A. D.

au like **ow** in *howl*.

oe (originally written **oi**) like **oi** in *spoil*.

ei as in *eight*, with a little exaggeration of the English sound **ee** at the end. So *hei*, *oiei.*

Note. Such words as *plebejus*, *Pompejus*, etc., though often written *plebeius*, etc., do not belong here.

eu like *eh–oo* rapidly pronounced; uncommon: occurs in interjections, as *ēheu*, *heu*, *heus*, in compounds *ceu*, *neu*, *seu* (for *ceve*, etc.), *neuter*, and in Greek words.

ui like the English **we**: found only in *hui* and in *cui* and *huic* for *quoi* and *hoic*.

CONSONANTS.

Gutturals. **k** as in English; **c** like **k** before all vowels.

"**K** in nullis verbis utendum puto nisi quae significat, etiam ut sola ponatur. hoc eo non omisi, quod quidam eam, quotiens **a** sequatur, necessariam credunt, cum sit **c** littera, quae ad omnis vocalis vim suam perferat." *Quintil.* 1, 7, 10.

"**K** enim et **q**, quamvis figura et nomine videantur aliquam habere differentiam, cum **c** tamen eandem tam in sono vocum quam in metro potestatem continent." *Priscian.* I. p. 12, [5], *Hertz.*

NOTE 1. When the combination -**ci**- is followed by a vowel, the **i** has a natural tendency toward the sound of **i consonans** or **j**, (English **y**); thus *condicio* easily runs into the sound *condicjo*, like the English mispronunciation of *kyind* for *kind.* In the course of time -**cj**- was again confused with -**tj**-. But in the literary period the distinction between -**ci**- and -**ti**- was rigidly adhered to: thus always *condicio*, never *conditio*, always *contio*, never *concio.* The oldest example of -**ti**- for -**ci**- dates 192–211 A. D., when the corruption *tribunitius* is found for *tribunicius.*

NOTE 2. At a very late period, beginning about the Sixth Century A. D., **c** was regularly assibilated before **e** and **i**: e. g. *incitamento* is written *intcitamento.*

g before **a o u** as in *garden;* before **e i y** as in *get.*

NOTE. **g** is sometimes followed by a parasitic **u**; "praeponitur **u** amittenti vim literae:" *Priscian.* I. p. 12, [13], *Hertz*: e. g. *anguis* like the English *anguish.* See **q** and **s** Note.

q and **h** as in English.

NOTE. **q** is sometimes a mere substitute for **c** before a single **u**; e. g. *pequnia*, *qura*, *qum*, for *pecunia*, *cura*, *cum.* Almost always, however, it is followed by a parasitic **u**, a combination equivalent to the English **qu**. Priscian, I. p. 7, [19], *Hertz*, distinguishes two shades of this faint vanishing **u**: "**u** autem, quamvis contractum, eundem tamen [hoc est **y**] sonum habet inter **q** et **e** vel **i** vel **ae** [?] diphthongum positum, ut 'que', 'quis', 'quae', [?] nec non inter **g** et easdem vocales, cum in una syllaba sic invenitur, ut 'pingue', 'sanguis',

'linguae' [?]." That is **gu** and **qu** when followed by **a** and **o** have more the sound of **u** (English **oo**) as in *quote ;* when followed by **e** and **i** more the sound of **ü** as in *quit.* This subtle distinction, while founded on physiological and phonetic necessity, is of no practical moment, as the combinations will be instinctively pronounced correctly. Priscian's statement about **ae** has been queried in the quotation above, and is to be explained by the mispronunciation of **ae** in his day (VIth Cent.) like **e.** See **ae.**

Labials. p, b, and **f** as in English.

"Non fixis labris est pronuntianda **f**, quomodo **ph**, atque hoc solum interest:" *Priscian.* I. p. 12,[1], *Hertz;* "**f** inter discrimina dentium efflanda est:" *Quintil.* 12, 10, 29.

Dentals. t as in *time;* **d** like the English **d.**

NOTE. Long after the literary period **-ti-**, followed by a vowel, was corrupted in sound to **-tchi-** (as in *church*) or **-tsi-**, and branches from this into various modifications of sound in the modern languages. The combination **ts** was odious to the Roman ear, and except in a loose compound, like *etsi*, avoided: e. g. *possum* for *potsum.*

Liquids. l, r, m, and **n** ordinarily as in English.

NOTE 1. The Romans distinguished three sounds of **l**: "Triplicem, ut Plinio videtur, sonum habet: exilem, quando geminatur secundo loco posita, ut 'ille', 'Metellus'; plenum, quando finit nomina vel syllabas, et quando aliquam habet ante se in eadem syllaba consonantem, ut 'sol', 'silva', 'flavus', 'clarus'; medium in aliis ut 'lectum', 'lectus'." *Priscian.* I. p. 29, [8], *Hertz.*

NOTE 2. **m** at the end of a word has a weak nasal sound. "Quotiens ultima est et vocalem verbi sequentis ita contingit, ut in eam transire possit, etiamsi scribitur, tamen parum exprimitur, ut 'multum ille' et 'quantum erat', adeo ut paene cujusdam novae litterae sonum reddat. neque enim eximitur, sed obscuratur et tantum in hoc aliqua inter duas vocales velut nota est, ne ipsae coëant." *Quintil.* 9, 4, 40. "Pleraque nos illa quasi mugiente **m** littera cludimus." *Idem*, 12, 10, 31.

"M obscurum in extremitate dictionum sonat, ut 'templum', apertum in principio, ut 'magnus', mediocre in mediis, ut 'umbra'." *Priscian.* I. p. 29, [16], *Hertz.*

NOTE 3. **n adulterinum.** **n** before a guttural (naturally also **x = cs**) assimilates to the guttural sound: e. g. *anceps* as in *ankle*, *anguis* as in *anguish*, *inquiro* as in *inkwiper*, *anxius* as in *anxious*.

NOTE 4. **n** before **s** has an indistinct sound and is often dropped both in writing and in pronunciation: e. g. *deciens* and *decies*, *formonsus* and *formosus*. (In a coin of the age of Caesar the sign **:** is used for this indistinct **n**, PARE:S for PARENS.)

Sibilants. **s** as in *sin*; **x** as in *expect;* the Greek letter **z** (ζ), like the English **z.**

NOTE 1. At the end of a word **s** is pronounced faintly when it follows a short vowel.

NOTE 2. The beginner should avoid the sound of **z** given to **s** at the end of English words after **b**, **e**, **n**, and **r**: e. g. *urbs* not as in *rubs*, *urbes* not as in *breezes*, *amans* not as in *pans*, *pars* not as in *stars*.

NOTE 3. **s** is sometimes followed by a parasitic **u** before **a** and **e**; *suavis*, *suetus*, as **sw** in English *sweet*.

Semivowels. **i consonans** and **u consonans** (**j** and **v**) like a **consonantal i** and **u**, namely, as **y** and **w**.